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SFMOMA AND BERKELEY ART MUSEUM REVEAL SHORTLISTS



BAM's renovation site in blue.

COURTESY BAM/PFA

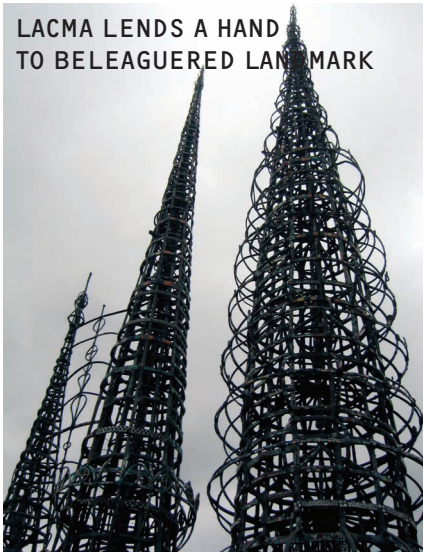
DECISIONS, DECISIONS

After much anticipation, SFMOMA and the Berkeley Art Museum have both revealed the shortlists for their major new architecture projects, and the Bay Area's cultural scene

is poised to go prime-time.

SFMOMA on May 11 announced that it had shortlisted four firms with international reputations, but no San Francisco-based firm. **continued on page 2**

LACMA LENDS A HAND TO BELEAGUERED LAND MARK



ED GOLDSTEIN

WATTS HAPPENING?

Officials at the LA County Museum of Art (LACMA) have offered to lend their expertise and fundraising power to help conserve south LA's iconic Watts Towers. The collection of quirky steel-and- **continued on page 3**



HWI CONSTRUCTION

A+D MUSEUM LANDS ON WILSHIRE SETTLING IN

After years of nomadic existence, LA's A+D Museum, created in 2001, is finally unpacking its suitcases. On April 27, its new space opened at 6032 Wilshire Boulevard, right across the street from LACMA and next to the Petersen Automotive Museum.

Since its founding, the A+D has bounced around the city, occupying locations donated by philanthropists like developer Ira Yellin, who gave the museum its first facility in downtown **continued on page 2**

TRANSAMERICA PYRAMID'S WOULD-BE NEIGHBOR QUASHED



SNAPS/FICKR

TOWER TOPPLED

San Francisco is known as a city where it can be tough to get almost anything built, and the fate of the condo tower known as 555 Washington has added more polish to that reputation. The proposed high-rise, located next to the Transamerica Pyramid, squeaked narrowly through the planning commission, only to be rebuffed by the board of **continued on page 6**

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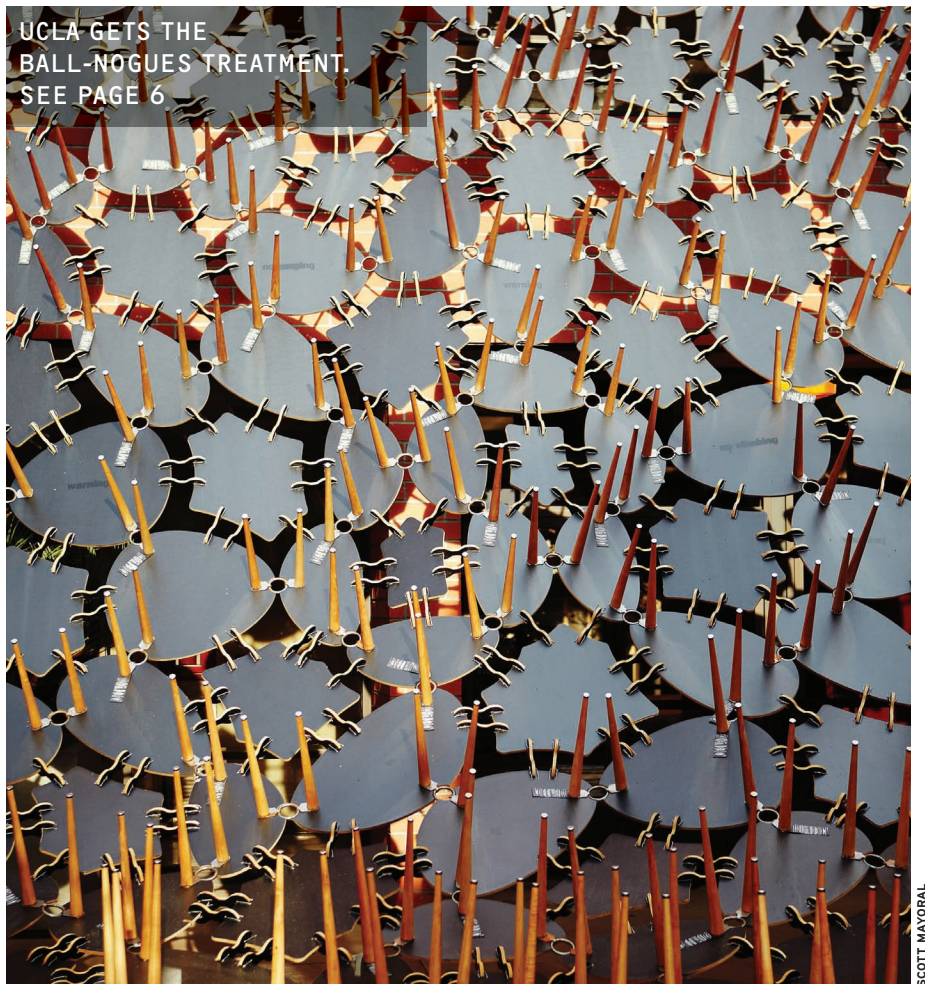
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MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY PLANS MAJOR OUTDOOR SPREAD FOR THE BIRDS

Located next to the LA Coliseum and USC, LA County's Natural History Museum (NHM) has long been trying to carve out a more naturalist **continued on page 9**

UCLA GETS THE BALL-NOGUES TREATMENT. SEE PAGE 6



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BRING ON YOUR BRIGHTEST

Between sky-high unemployment, wilting public funding, and still-dormant private markets, it may not be a great time to be an architect in California. But it is a great time for something else: ideas competitions. Not since we started the California edition has there been such a wealth of inspiration. It seems the slow economy has brought about the golden age of California brainstorming.

Topicality and originality are in order in such contests as the LA Forum's Dingbat 2.0, reconsidering Los Angeles' ubiquitous "dingbat" apartment building for the 21st century; *The Architect's Newspaper* and SCI-Arc's Los Angeles Clean Tech Corridor/Green District Competition, calling for new sustainable planning, power, and architectural ideas for LA's Clean Tech Corridor; advocacy group Rail LA's call for ideas to envision high-speed rail options for LA; the LAUSD's upcoming contest to renovate—and not abandon—its existing schools; *Good Magazine's* school garden design competition; and more. You can check out our online competition page as well as the LA Forum site to find a full list of these undertakings.

Not only do these competitions encourage innovative thinking about the cities and buildings around us, but they're a perfect way for architects and designers to show off their skills and to experiment with new ideas. Of course, entering competitions takes time and money, and the latter is in short supply these days. Many competitions don't have much to offer in terms of prizes, another casualty of the recession. We encourage those putting contests together to do whatever they can to come up with suitable prizes for those entering, and we encourage potential sponsors to dig into their pockets to support the kind of innovation that will be likely to pay back solid dividends soon enough.

But firms should see slow times as a way to experiment and grow, even if that means losing some money in the process. It's an investment that will be well worth it in the long term. Invariably, firms use at least part of the designs they've developed in future projects.

Competitions are a rich tradition in architecture—more so in Europe than in America. In boom times, architects across the spectrum are too flat out busy banging out documents and presentations to engage in the pause and reflection that competitions demand. But it's high time to use the current downtime to tap the wells of creativity latent in so much architectural thinking.

After all, the Acropolis, the Florence Cathedral dome, the Sydney Opera House, the Centre Pompidou, and the Jewish Museum in Berlin were all designs inspired by competition. Even for those who don't want to join contests, it's still useful to examine the ideas coming out of competitions. What good is a recession if it doesn't give us time to reflect about what we're making?

SAM LUBELL

SETTLING IN continued from front page

LA's Bradbury Building in 2001. It then moved to Santa Monica (2003), to West Hollywood (2003–2005), and finally to its most recent location on Miracle Mile (2006–2009), a large space donated by developer Wayne Ratkovich.

The new 5,000-square-foot venue, a pristine space a couple blocks west of A+D's most recent home, is situated on the ground floor of a small midcentury office building, and in a space once occupied by an unremarkable furniture store. The building team has transformed the aging building, removing clunky decorative panels between the building's windows, painting it white, and adding sleek metallic signage emblazoned with the museum's logo. Under the sign, the museum has new recessed glass doors and completely glazed frontage.

Inside, the museum has a 3,500-square-foot main gallery, a 500-square-foot small gallery, as well as office and support space. Drop ceilings were removed to open things up, and a sleek lighting grid was added, along with eco-friendly concrete floors. The team also brought the space's deteriorating structural issues up to date.

Kanner Architects (whose principal Steven Kanner co-founded the museum) donated their services, as did Richard Meier and Partners and Gensler. Construction was overseen by Hinerfeld-Ward, with a huge team that included Turner Construction, Hathaway Dinwiddie, Matt Construction, and Minardos Group. All, noted museum director Tibbie Dunbar, are competitors who came together for the museum.

Dunbar estimates that the donated services added up to at least \$250,000.

"It's amazing that these people came in with what's going on in the construction business," she said. Major funding for the project, and for the museum's subsequent work, came from an effort called 20/20, with \$24,000 coming from each name on a lengthy list of noted architects and designers.

"We had been on ten-day notice for the last two years. This is a huge shift in the paradigm for us. I know what my fall 2011 exhibit will be. I couldn't have done that before without a stable location," said Dunbar.

Upcoming exhibits this year, with titles subject to change, include *Come In*, a spatial intervention at the museum featuring the work of young designers; the AIA LA Design awards; and *Never Built*, a collaboration with the Getty Research Institute displaying unbuilt work planned for LA. **SAM LUBELL**

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DECISIONS, DECISIONS continued from front page

Francisco office, to design their next expansion: David Adjaye, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Snøhetta, and Foster + Partners. Foster's is the one name that had not been leaked before the announcement.

The SFMOMA expansion, located around the corner from the museum at 670–676 Howard Street, has been in the works since last spring, but it took on renewed importance in September when Gap founder Don Fisher decided to bequeath his considerable collection to the museum, following a failed effort on the Presidio. The winner will have \$250 million to work with once fundraising is complete, with the firms expected to present their final proposals sometime next year.

The project is slated for completion by 2016.

In addition to creating a second iconic building, the expansion is very much about showing more art. Currently, the Botta building, while 225,000 square feet in size, only contains 65,000 square feet of galleries. The new building will add a minimum of 100,000 square feet of gallery and public space between it and the original Botta building. "Many things will change about the design from this initial foray into a general concept, over the course of the next year," said SFMOMA Director Neal Benezra.

On April 27, three contenders for the Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film Archive's new home were announced: Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Tod Williams Billie Tsien, both of New

York, and Ann Beha Architects of Boston.

While the first two are big-league players and had been part of the museum's first competition plan (won by Toyo Ito and subsequently scrapped for budgetary reasons), the third is a relative unknown, even on the East Coast.

Ann Beha Architects has several museums to its credit, including two that involved additions to historic buildings: the Portland Museum of Art in Maine and the Currier Museum of Art in New Hampshire. The firm is also known for its careful transformation of Boston's 1851 Charles Street Jail into a luxury hotel.

The remaining seven of the 10 asked to present qualifications were: David Adjaye, Will Bruder, Frederick Fisher, Michael Maltzan,

Snøhetta, Bernard Tschumi, and Rafael

Viñoly, making for a significant overlap with the SFMOMA list.

The winner will be collaborating with EHDD as architect of record. The project involves the adaptive reuse of a 1939 printing plant vacant since 2005 on Oxford Street, near the entrance to the UC Berkeley campus. The overall budget is around \$85 million, less than half of the \$200 million estimated necessary for the original design proposed by Ito. The winner is expected to be announced at the end of June, and the building is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2014.

LYDIA LEE

BIG GREEN SLAM

Frank Gehry is always honest, and we love that. Especially when it gets him into trouble. Speaking to **Thomas Pritzker**, the CEO of the Pritzker Organization, during the annual lecture on Urban Life and Issues in Chicago, Gehry called LEED purely political and complained, "A lot of LEED is given for bogus stuff." He added that the costs of making a green building are "enormous," and "they don't pay back in your lifetime." Ah, the privileges of fame, and being 70-plus.

EROGENOUS ZONING

We've learned from our friends at the *SF Chronicle* that SF planning director **John Rahaim** has recommended the firing of four senior planners—including longtime zoning administrator **Larry Badiner**—for receiving and circulating X-rated photos and videos. According to the *Chronicle's* city hall deep throat, as many as two dozen staffers may have received e-mails at work containing sexually explicit material, along with joking comments that some construed as racist and homophobic.

PARTY OF THE YEAR

The gala to celebrate the A+D Museum in its new home surpassed even the museum's expectations, with hundreds crowding into the new space and spilling over into the back parking lot. While celebs like **Wolfgang Puck** showed up, the real stars were those who produced models and paintings for auction, including **Richard Meier**, **Thom Mayne**, **Hitoshi Abe**, **David Arquette** (hubby of **Courtney Cox**), **Bruce Mau**, **Max Neutra**, **Lorcan O'Herlihy**, and many more. It was a great launch for a great museum.

AT THE WEALTH SPRINGS

Diane Keaton is always a welcome sight, particularly when she's promoting preservation, as she did at *LA Magazine's* breakfast discussion with LA Conservancy director **Linda Dishman** at FIG restaurant on April 28. At the event, Keaton made some missteps: She couldn't think of her favorite Department of Water and Power Building or her favorite place to go downtown; but she did raise a very good point about the unwillingness of LA's super-rich to fund the restoration of some of its most precious architecture. She voiced her hope that LACMA, the Getty, or someone like **Brad Pitt** would purchase such vulnerable treasures as **Frank Lloyd Wright's** Ennis House. And who better to convince them but a fellow star? Later that night, this guttersnipe was a lucky attendee at a dinner for the Milken Global Conference, where we talked to host **Michael Milken**. He professed a great love of architecture, but we didn't dare ask him to name names.

SEND BIG BUCKS AND PG-13 VIDEOS, PLEASE, TO EAVESDROP@ARCHPAPER.COM

WATTS HAPPENING? continued from front page mortar structures, completed by outsider artist Simon Rodia after 30 years in 1954, reach up to 100 feet and are covered with mosaics of broken glass, sea shells, pottery, and tile. Due to gradual neglect, they are now plagued with peeling paint, crumbling concrete, and degrading glass. The cash-strapped city's Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) that has long overseen their upkeep can no longer afford to properly conserve them.

"The idea is, we've offered to be helpful and offered to coordinate others who will be helpful," said LACMA director Michael Govan. According to DCA Executive Director Olga Garay, \$5 million is needed to complete the deferred maintenance of the towers, but the agency will only be able to direct about \$178,000 toward the effort this year. Moreover, DCA's historic site curator has opted to take early retirement.

LACMA will most likely be working with the Getty Conservation Institute, which has offered to collaborate on the project, and is also talking with officials at the California African American Museum, which has offered staff and fundraising resources, said LACMA spokesperson Christine Choi. Govan said it's still too early to detail what specific work will be carried out and what funds will be raised, but he did say that LACMA wants to look at the structures as pieces of fine art, a perspective that the city has been lacking for years. "They don't have the same focus on object conservation," he said.

Leading the way in that conservation would be Mark Gilberg, director of LACMA's conservation department, and Frank Preusser, LACMA's senior conservation

scientist. Preusser, who works as a private consultant, has been involved with the towers for years. Among other things, the team will gather archives from Cultural Affairs, speak with volunteers who have offered conservation assistance in the past, and re-evaluate a preservation plan developed by city and state in the 1980s, said Choi. More information on the plan will be available after the team completes its initial assessment. DCA and LACMA should have a Memorandum of Understanding, with a full plan for the renovation, completed by July, according to DCA's Garay.

Govan stressed that there is no silver bullet to fix the towers once and for all. "The damage is ongoing and cumulative," he said. "It needs constant attention, at a higher level over time." **SL**



DANA GRAVES



> ONE KEARNY LOBBY

One Kearny Street
San Francisco
Tel: 415-561-7768
Designer: IwamotoScott

IWAMOTOSCOTT

San Francisco's IwamotoScott is known for their conceptual designs, but an office building on One Kearny and 710 Market streets offers a tantalizing glimpse of their fully realized work. The team designed the lobby of One Kearny—a tripartite unit that consists of a 1902 building sandwiched between a 1964 Charles Moore addition and a contemporary office by Charles Blozies—creating a permanent installation that is a modern riff on the traditional coffered ceiling. Here, the coffers have metamorphosed into lights made from sheets of paper-thin wood veneer, and the traditional square form is skewed into diamonds that reflect the angles of the lobby hallway. *Lightfold* was able to qualify as art for the city's "two percent for art" funding requirement for projects—and is something you can catch without braving the lines at SFMOMA. **LL**

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27TH STREET RESIDENCE



LAKE TAHOE BEACH HOUSE



PHOTO STUDIO



PINE STREET LOFTS



Flexibility is a virtue, particularly when you work on wildly diverse sites as Owen Kennerly Architecture & Planning does. The four-person San Francisco firm makes the most of the city's urban framework, creating unique spatial progressions and view corridors while building on tight or even sloping plots. They've also learned to work in rural areas, where environmental and

landscape restrictions are completely different from urban settings. "It's not just making it look slick and beautiful, but the internal problem-solving that goes into these projects," said founder Owen Kennerly, who sees each as an "investigation." The studio is also flexible in terms of style, often incorporating classic ideas in a modern way. "I don't

like to be polemical," Kennerly stressed. Kennerly, who graduated from Berkeley in 1994 and works together with his wife Sarina Bowen Kennerly, is one of the city's rising stars, and his firm was one of six to win an AIA SF Emerging Practices Award last spring. The downturn has slowed some of their projects, but things seem to be getting back on track with fascinating work. **SL**

27TH STREET RESIDENCE
SAN FRANCISCO

The project is nicknamed the "Vessel" because "it feels like it's surfing on the land," Kennerly said. In fact it is a 3,800-square-foot addition to a small home in San Francisco's Noe Valley. The existing building volume is clad in a scrim of cedar pickets stretching back into the slope of the site's steep hill to establish a podium of bedrooms and service areas. To prevent the dark centers that often plague townhouses, front-to-back living spaces with glass at both ends open to a panoramic view and garden. And to make an unusual progression of space feel more unified, each square foot gets used: Hallways become stairs, and vice-versa. Shaped by the slipstream of neighbors' views and sightlines, the faceted-cedar master suite is suspended overhead like a ship (another reason for the house's name), set between skylights.

LAKE TAHOE BEACH HOUSE
LAKE TAHOE

Conceived as three conjoined cabins, this 2,400-square-foot vacation home combines modern architecture with rustic living on a challenging north shore site of Lake Tahoe. In response to local ordinances that require new structures to minimize their drainage "shadow" along the perimeter of the lake (Kennerly hired a botanist to make a study), the design lifts the bulk of the dwelling a full floor above grade with generous cantilevers that reduce its effective footprint. Kennerly calls this form "an inverted ziggurat." Thus the existing spatial flow of the site is retained, and a sheltered patio is created at grade. Accessed by a long ramping stair, the home's slight variations—like mild level changes and walls that pinch in subtly—make it cozy for two people or as many as 20. The material palette combines blackened zinc with board-formed concrete, natural cedar, and glass.

PHOTO STUDIO
MARIN COUNTY

This new building, designed with architect Jon Oelschig, replaces a dilapidated barn set among mature trees, "capturing the spirit," said Kennerly, of the barn's vernacular form and of the peaceful setting around it. "It's got the logic and clarity of an agricultural building with a modern twist," he added. The firm used the proportions of the barn and rotated the new space 90 degrees, allowing for more natural light plus strategic shading. The main workspace is a gabled basilica structured by pre-engineered steel frames and wrapped in a skin of Cor-ten steel, polycarbonate, and salvaged redwood. The space is heated with a hydronic radiant floor and is passively cooled using thermal mass, natural ventilation, and the shade of existing trees. Combined with the double polycarbonate skin, the space is luminous, elegant, and relatively affordable at \$350,000.

PINE STREET LOFTS
SAN FRANCISCO

Located on a small 37-by-75-foot lot on a nondescript block on the south slope of Nob Hill, this five-story building reinterprets the city's traditional architecture by taking the classic order of base, middle, and top, and unifying it behind a terra-cotta rain screen. It employs San Francisco's omnipresent bay windows, but here the minimal double-height openings resemble sleek prisms and allow views both outward and around the block. A two-story lobby slips up between the windows. The top apartments feature mezzanines opening onto private roof decks with views across downtown.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: OWEN KENNERLY, OWEN KENNERLY, THOMAS HEINER, TIM GRIFFITH



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Flush Door



dwell
ON DESIGN
6/25-6/27

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SCOTT MAYORAL

BALL-NOGUES INSTALLATION DRAPES UCLA COURTYARD

SETTING TABLES

Ball-Nogues' installations—*Maximilian's Schel* at Materials & Applications in 2005 and *Liquid Sky* at New York's PS1 in 2007—have brought them a well-deserved cult following.

Their latest piece, *Table Cloth*, has just been completed in the courtyard of the Herb Alpert School of Music's 1970s-era Schoenberg Hall at UCLA. It consists of 268 finished plywood dining tables and stools, loosely connected via metal rings and flexible plywood members, and hanging like a curtain from a steel beam bolted into one of the building's topmost lintels. From straight on, each faceted piece glitters when struck by sunlight. From the side, it looks more like spiky chain-mail armor.

"They're engineered to hang on each other, so we've essentially made a piece of cloth," explained principal Ben Ball.

The installation serves as a backdrop for performances by music department students: A plywood stage can be placed over sections that touch the ground, and the irregular geometry of the installation helps reduce echo and reverberation. The first performance was on April 26.

Ball-Nogues developed the project with students at UCLA's Department of Architecture and Urban Design. Music students also contributed. The irregularly shaped three-legged tables and stools were made individually by a CNC router. "We wanted to make furniture that was appropriate for the [late-modern] era of the building," Ball said.

Perhaps the most innovative feature is that the tables and stools will be reused by UCLA students and departments when summer's over. "We thought, how can you build another life out of materials instead of just recycling them?" said Ball, who hopes to provoke fresh thinking both about art installations and sustainability. "Something doesn't have to become less valuable when you take it apart."

The project was funded by grants from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies and the UCLA Arts Initiative. Buro Happold provided engineering pro bono. And music students are already asking how they can perform on or with *Table Cloth*.

SL

TOWER TOPPLED continued from front page supervisors, who wield the final yea or nay on many city projects. The board voted 10-0 to uphold two appeals by neighborhood groups against the Environmental Impact Review (EIR).

During its meeting in late April, the supervisors asserted that the EIR did not fully address the shadows and wind tunnels that would be created, along with transportation issues and aesthetic impacts of the 430-foot tower. More than twice the height allowed by current zoning, the project triggered a highly politicized debate. Four of the supervisors voted to hold off on a final decision about the EIR until May 18—giving the developer more time to negotiate with the opposition—but they were in the minority, so the project is finished for now.

The developer has given up, as well. In an interview with *AN*, Andrew Segal, who was representing project backer Aegon, confirmed that there would be no second round. "There's a loss of confidence in the process," Segal said. "If it were just a matter of redoing an EIR, that would be one thing, but it's pretty clear that there's no

appetite for the building in San Francisco." He added that the EIR had gone through extensive public scrutiny. "It's complete and thorough," he said.

One local group appealing the project EIR was Telegraph Hill Dwellers, who had protested the building's height, in addition to "several other exceptions and variances from the code," according to a statement released prior to the supervisors' meeting. Former Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin, who is known for opposing development in the area, described the project in a follow-up interview as "brazen and audacious," and as making "a mockery of the downtown plan." He said, "The moral of this story is, 'When you shoot the moon, sometimes you get nothing.'"

The run-up to the board meeting included a letter to the supervisors from Segal, who warned that "any additional cost and time associated from yet more environmental review will render the project economically infeasible." In addition to the building itself, the proposal had involved the purchase of a public alleyway and creation of a new public park. LL



COURTESY FRISHMAN ARCHITECTURE

Jon Frishman traded in jobs at SOM, Gwathmey Siegel, and Richard Meier & Partners (where he worked on the Getty Center) for independent practice in a house-studio that has taken him 12 years to complete. Despite recurring setbacks, he achieved the same crisp elegance and light-infused serenity that Meier brings to his best houses at a fraction of the cost (about \$150 per square foot). The steep view site is located high in Laurel Canyon—a neighborhood that was hippie heaven in the 1960s but is now quite gentrified. He acquired a decrepit old house perched on a steep slope at a bargain price in 1997, and immediately sat down to design his own. Inspired by jazz rhythms (Frishman plays African drums in a downtown LA park on Sundays) and the Constructivist geometry of El Lissitzky, he dashed off the working drawings in two weeks. It took only six months to secure permits, demolish the old house, reinforce the existing foundations, and erect a delicate steel frame.

Then the problems began. Frishman had to do all kinds of jobs (including a parking garage for Disneyland) to make some money. No contractor could achieve the quality he insisted on at a price he could afford. The first set of windows leaked badly and had to be replaced. It took a year to find a glazier who could install the large sheets of plate glass. Subs came and went, and he ended up doing much of the work himself. Week after week, year after year—with time out to build his practice—he installed the aluminum and stucco cladding, drywall, and built-in cabinets. “Friends thought I was crazy,

The modernist-inspired house makes its way up a treacherously steep site in Laurel Canyon; large windows, an open plan, and glass stairs make the living spaces seem larger; the ipé wood terrace is surrounded by treetops.

that it would never be finished,” he said. “I wondered about that myself.”

From the street, you see only an expanse of translucent glass. This slides away to reveal a scarlet Alfa-Romeo Spyder in the garage and a tiny landscaped forecourt. Outside and in, there’s a sense of lightness in the thin walls and sharply cut openings, but the purity of the design is tempered by the human scale and materiality. Frishman learned from his teacher, William Turnbull, that skylights should be placed at the edge of a room so that light washes over walls. The honed slate pavers of the open living area flow out through glass sliders to the terrace, which hovers like a diving board above the canyon. A grating in the living room can be flipped up to reveal springy steel stairs leading down to a studio suspended among the eucalyptus trees. A staircase with laminated glass treads leads up to the master bedroom and an ipé wood terrace, where every piece was calculated in advance to eliminate waste. Frishman wrapped a powder-coated steel sink around a black walnut cabinet (which is a native wood and therefore “greener” than imported Chinese bamboo) in the two bathrooms, and located an open-sided shower beneath the stairs. That’s one of a dozen original details in a 1,700-square-foot house that conceals the frugality and improvisations of its construction. **MICHAEL WEBB**

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER MAY 26, 2010

CRIT> MULLIN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM



The Mullin Automotive Museum, which opened last month in Oxnard, California, is one of the most imposingly beautiful car collections in the country, on display in one of the nation's most nondescript locales. Peter Mullin, a Brentwood businessman and chairman emeritus of a multibillion-dollar executive compensation and benefits planning firm, has parked his curvaceous French art deco machines in a 1990s tilt-up warehouse, in the middle of an industrial

park on converted farmland flat as an iron skillet. Before Santa Monica architect David Hertz revamped it, the building literally was the architecture of nowhere.

The museum houses more than 50 Bugattis, Delages, Delahayes, Talbot Lagos, Hispano-Suizas, and Avion Voisins. The cars are marvels of engineering, speed, and design—sweeping, hand-hammered fenders and coaches built around aluminum chassis and super-charged straight-eight and V12 engines. No

other automotive designs have so successfully alloyed pure sumptuous sensuality to a blast of raw, roaring horsepower.

After rejecting a proposal to remodel the structure in a literal interpretation of streamline saloons, cabriolets, and racers, Mullin recruited Hertz to give the museum an identity without succumbing to idolatry. Hertz, known for developing the lightweight concrete Syndecrete, and for his ongoing Wing House (made out of pieces of a

Boeing 747) in Malibu, has intervened with restraint. “The sophistication of the cars speaks much more eloquently than any attempt to mimic them,” he said.

The tilt-up previously held *Times-Mirror* scion Otis Chandler's assemblage of muscle cars and motorcycles—a California surfer's obsession. Oddly, Chandler had never bothered to adapt the bland structure to suit the image of his collection. The museum remained a warehouse, complete with a single



door leading to a small office that was the “foyer.” To get to the showroom, you passed a typical front desk, as if you were going to inspect an overseas shipment stacked in cardboard boxes, and not some very valuable, and beautiful, cars.

Hertz's instincts are good. He attacked the building head-on by punching a large entrance into the off-street side of the huge concrete shell, while essentially leaving the rest of the building alone. Hertz then deepened the opening and installed an inverted stair-step lintel composed of clear anodized aluminum plates with exposed rivets (inspired by the monocoque frames of early Bugattis). A canopy made of dozens of Ford Econoline van windshields laid onto a sloped steel framework—referring, obliquely, to the Paris Metro canopies of Hector Guimard—covers a landscaped patio. By extending the building envelope outward to claim the driveway and inward to seize hold of the interior, Hertz has offered not just a sense of procession—sorely lacking in the prior incarnation—but he's blasted the orthodoxy of his surroundings. This warehouse has style and an appropriate sense of grandeur.

Along the street side of the building, Hertz draped a flat scrim several hundred feet long. It includes three abstracts—versions of the rear fender, the roof, and the front fender of the 1938 Talbot Lago “Tear Drop.” At the corner near the

The warehouse's interior (left, above and below) was largely untouched, revealing a hard palette that meshes with the museum's cars. The exterior canopy (above) is made of van windshields.

parking lot, he added a perforated metal grille the height of the building, announcing the “Mullin Automotive Museum.” Nothing bold here; just enough to shed the anonymity that otherwise would permanently cloak the museum's identity.

A few strokes complete the interior. Hertz blackened the ceiling, punched an elevator shaft straight through the roof, where he added a deck—a complete anomaly in a landscape of unused flat roofs—and purposely laid out the museum on its long axis to unveil the collection as slowly as possible. Hertz also convinced Mullin to make the building largely energy self-sufficient (although there are no plans to pursue a LEED rating). The rooftop includes 20 wind turbines, 132 solar panels, and an 830-square-foot green roof, not to mention spectacular views of the nearby Los Padres National Forest.

The 60,000-square-foot project, which took eight months to complete, cost about \$6 million. “That's less than the cost of any one of the cars in the museum,” quipped Hertz. Well worth the price for providing a subtle sense of identity, while shrewdly loosening the confining boundaries of industrial park architecture.

GREG GOLDIN

COURTESY MULLIN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM

North Campus plan renderings.



FOR THE BIRDS continued from front page niche. And in late April, the museum announced its new North Campus plans, which will essentially be a heavily-planted outdoor exhibition space and welcome mat for visitors, due to open in the summer of 2011.

The \$30 million, 3.5-acre project will include lush gardens and plazas, outdoor exhibits, and integrated architectural elements. The project is the most ambitious merger of architecture and landscape in California since San Francisco unveiled the undulating green roof of Renzo Piano's rebuilt California Academy of Sciences in 2008.

The plans are being overseen by a team of local firms, including CO Architects (now completing a historic renovation and seismic retrofit of NHM's 1913 Building), Mia Lehrer + Associates, and Cordell Corporation project management.

"Exhibits, architecture, and landscape will all be integrated. You won't be able to tell where one begins and one ends," said CO Architects associate principal Fabian Kremkus, who has been working on the project for about two years.

Museum staff dreamed up the North Campus plan in the hope of capitalizing on the local climate and continuing to re-energize



CO ARCHITECTS, MIA LEHRER + ASSOCIATES

the museum after its recent addition of seven new galleries and five new permanent exhibitions. The campus was made possible when LA County agreed to fund a new \$10 million, multi-level car park for the museum, freeing up land once used for surface parking. The additional \$20 million for the campus will be raised by the museum. The car park, located on the northwest edge of the project, is on the site of a potential museum addition by New York architect Steven Holl, first proposed in 2002, which hasn't been able to attract enough funding to go forward, said museum spokesperson Cynthia Wornham. "There are no plans at this point, but we continue to reserve space for a building if funding becomes available in the future," she said. The addition could be juxtaposed with the car park if necessary, she explained.

With the new North Campus, the entry experience from Exposition Boulevard will be dramatically altered. Visitors will make their way through 11 thematic zones, including the Urban Edge, made of a series of butterfly and bird hedges formed by angled steel panels and fences; the Entrance Plaza, a decomposed granite gathering place filled with plant life; and the Living Wall, a stone

barrier made from rubble of the museum's former north entrance, set with plants, insects, and other wildlife.

The east portion of the new campus will contain a variety of habitats, including a Pollinator Garden for insects such as butterflies and bees; an Urban Wilderness full of native trees and plants, set with habitats for birds and insects; and a Home Garden, a terraced space of fruit trees and other plants meant largely for educational instruction. Many of these habitats will be intended for visitors, but others will be used by museum scientists to carry out experiments.

Major architectural elements include Plexiglas skylights and stepped wooden platforms in the Pollinator Garden that would allow visitors to get as close as possible to the wildlife. Even the car park will merge with the land, fitted with a wire mesh canopy of flowering vines and hummingbird and butterfly habitats. The new Main Entrance Bridge will be made of curved white steel trusses, abstractly emulating mammoth whale bones, and its concrete walkway will be set with shells. The work will also include a stepped landscaped seating area in front of the museum called by the awkward name "the Strampitheater" (for stair, ramp, amphitheater), for outdoor events.

Kremkus thinks that the new project is a step beyond what was built at the SF Academy of Sciences, since its natural elements will be easier to visit and literally more down-to-earth. The whole thing is a scientific learning opportunity, he said. "We all know what a raccoon is, but did you know that there are 96 species of bees?"

SL

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Design Competition

Los Angeles Unified School District is inviting Architectural Firms to participate in 2 design competitions to create the most aesthetic, flexible and efficient building prototypes to be replicated and site adapted on multiple campuses.

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<http://www.laschools.org/employee/fcs/rfqs-rfps>
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MAY

WEDNESDAY 26

LECTURES

John Rahaim and Ken Kirkey
Growth and Planning: San Francisco's Role in the Region
12:30 p.m.

San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association
654 Mission St., San Francisco
www.spur.org

Mary Beebe and Alexis Smith
Art in Public Places

7:00 p.m.
Newport Beach Central Library
1000 Avocado Ave.
Newport Beach
www.ocma.net

EXHIBITION OPENING

Mark Harrington:
Depth of Field

Edward Cella Art + Architecture
6018 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.edwardcella.com

THURSDAY 27

LECTURE

Curtis Fentress
Touchstones of Design
6:00 p.m.
A+D Museum
6032 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
aplusd.org

FRIDAY 28

LECTURE

Linda Duke
The Museum of Wonder
12:00 p.m.
Farmlab
1745 North Spring St.
Los Angeles
www.farmlab.org

SATURDAY 29

EXHIBITION OPENING

Julie Orser: Playback
Steve Turner Contemporary
6026 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.steveturnercontemporary.com

SUNDAY 30

LECTURE

Julian Brooks
Leonardo da Vinci versus Michelangelo: Battles in the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence
3:00 p.m.
The J. Paul Getty Center
1200 Getty Center Dr.
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

JUNE

TUESDAY 1

LECTURE

Juliet Koss
Spectral Gesamtkunstwerk
1:00 p.m.
The Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.hammer.ucla.edu

WEDNESDAY 2

LECTURE

Mary Miller
Envisioning a New World
7:30 p.m.
The J. Paul Getty Villa
17985 Pacific Coast Hwy.
Pacific Palisades
www.getty.edu

EVENT

ConnectWorking Super Mixer

7:00 p.m.
Custom Hotel
8639 Lincoln Blvd.
Los Angeles
aialosangeles.org

THURSDAY 3

LECTURES

Daria Martin
and Anna Halprin

7:00 p.m.
The Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.hammer.ucla.edu

Mel Chin: So I guess it has to be this way...

7:00 p.m.
Santa Monica Museum of Art
2525 Michigan Ave.
Santa Monica
www.smmao.org

FRIDAY 4

LECTURE

David Erdman, Clover Lee, and Eric Owen Moss
Immuring

7:00 p.m.
SCI-Arc Gallery
960 East 3rd St., Los Angeles
www.sciarc.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING

Hiroshige: Visions of Japan
Norton Simon Museum
411 West Colorado Blvd.
Pasadena
www.nortonsimon.org

SUNDAY 6

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

Arshile Gorky: A Retrospective
MOCA Grand Avenue
250 South Grand Ave.
Los Angeles
www.moca.org

Here Not There:

San Diego Art Now
Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego
700 Prospect St.
La Jolla
www.mcasd.org

MONDAY 7

SYMPOSIUM

The Disappearing Hand: Architectural Representation After Representation
2:00 p.m.
UCLA College of Architecture and Urban Design
Wyton Dr. and Hilgard Ave.
Los Angeles
www.aud.ucla.edu

TUESDAY 8

LECTURE

Alex McDowell, Lisa Jackson and Boris Hars-Tschachotin
Creating Cinematic Worlds
7:00 p.m.
The J. Paul Getty Center
1200 Getty Center Dr.
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

WEDNESDAY 9

LECTURE

Bobbi Leonard, Mark Cutler, et al.
Bad Times are Good Times: The Silver Lining
11:00 a.m.
Pacific Design Center
8687 Melrose Ave.
West Hollywood
www.pacificdesigncenter.com

THURSDAY 10

LECTURE

April Philips and Allegra Bukojemsky
The Sustainable Sites Initiative
6:30 p.m.

AIA San Francisco
130 Sutter St., San Francisco
www.aiaf.org

CONVENTION

AIA National Convention

8:15 a.m.
Miami Beach Convention Center
1901 Convention Center Dr.
Miami Beach, Florida
www.aiamiami.com

EVENTS

Metropolitan Water District Spring Green Expo

8:30 a.m.
MWD Headquarters
700 North Alameda St.
Los Angeles
www.mwdh2o.com

Downtown Art Walk

12:00 p.m.
Various venues
Los Angeles
downtownartwalk.com

FRIDAY 11

LECTURE

Denny Zane
It's Time to Move LA
12:00 p.m.
Farmlab
1745 North Spring St.
Los Angeles
www.movela.org

WEDNESDAY 16

EVENT

Toward a Just Metropolis: From Crises to Possibilities
6:00 p.m.
Wurster Hall & International House Auditorium
UC Berkeley
Bancroft Way and Telegraph Ave., Berkeley
www.justmetropolis.org

THURSDAY 17

LECTURES

Amit Ghosh, Lisa Feldstein, Ada Chan, et al.
A Regional Dialogue on Community Planning
6:00 p.m.
MetroCenter
101 8th St., Oakland
www.justmetropolis.org

Colson Whitehead

7:00 p.m.
The Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles
www.hammer.ucla.edu

SATURDAY 19

EVENT

Lewis Mumford Awards
6:00 p.m.
Wurster Hall
UC Berkeley
Bancroft Way and Telegraph Ave., Berkeley
www.adpsr.org

MONDAY 21

CONFERENCE

California Higher Education Sustainability Conference
8:00 a.m.
Los Angeles Community College District
770 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles
2010higheredsustainabilityconference.org

TUESDAY 22

EVENT

Southern California Association of Governments Toolbox Tuesday: Envision Tomorrow Suite

10:00 a.m.
Lewis Library and Technology Center
8437 Sierra Ave.
Fontana
www.scag.ca.gov

WEDNESDAY 23

FILM

Last Remaining Seats: Wild Flower

(Emilio Fernandez, 1943), 94 min.
8:00 p.m.
Million Dollar Theatre
307 South Broadway
Los Angeles
www.laconservancy.org

THURSDAY 24

CONFERENCE

Mobius LA

LA Convention Center
9:15 a.m.
1201 South Figueroa St.
Los Angeles
aialosangeles.org

EXHIBITION OPENING

Fractional Systems: Garage Project II

Mackey Apartments
1137 South Cochran Ave.
Los Angeles
www.makcenter.org

FRIDAY 25

LECTURE

Meher McArthur
Hiroshige: Master of the Printed Landscape
7:00 p.m.
Norton Simon Museum
411 West Colorado Blvd.
Pasadena
www.nortonsimon.org

SYMPOSIUM

Surrealism in Latin America
10:00 a.m.
The J. Paul Getty Center
1200 Getty Center Dr.
Los Angeles
www.getty.edu

EXHIBITION OPENING

Calder to Warhol: Introducing the Fisher Collection

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
151 3rd St.
San Francisco
www.sfmoma.org

SUNDAY 27

LECTURE

Amanda Ross-Ho, Mark Flores, and Carter Mull
The Desktop Picture Plane
2:00 p.m.
Orange County Museum of Art
850 San Clemente Dr.
Newport Beach
www.ocma.net

CONFERENCE

BOMA 2010 International Conference and the Every Building Show

8:00 a.m.
Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center
300 East Ocean Blvd.
Long Beach
www.bomaconvention.org



COURTESY CLUI

THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE:
STREAMS OF TRANSIT IN SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA'S GREAT PASS

Center for Land Use Interpretation
9331 Venice Boulevard, Culver City
Through July 25

At the collision of the San Gabriel and Tehachapi mountain ranges is a place called Grapevine, a ravine-laced landscape that cleaves Southern California from the rest of the state. This exhibition at the Center for Land Use Interpretation traces the monumental layers of traffic, water, and energy that “move like a braided stream through the mountainous terrain, connecting here to there.” Named for the wild Cimarron grapes found along the roadside, the area has long been known for its snaking transit lines, most familiar among them Interstate 5. This eight-lane asphalt ribbon follows portions of the old Ridge Route, the original 1915 highway, and sites of notoriety like Deadman’s Curve, a perilous turn that would send trucks and cars toppling to the aptly named “Junk Yard” in the canyon below. Overhead and alongside these corridors are high-pressure gas pipelines and electrical transmission towers, parts of the state’s labyrinthine energy networks that link the Los Angeles megalopolis with the Central Valley. Sites like the Castaic Overlook (above) mark another uneasy alliance of infrastructures, in this case a state drinking water reservoir that doubles as a haven for pleasure-boating. Pervading this informative survey is a sense of the geology that has fatefully shaped California’s past, and—as wind farms cluster along the ridgelines—the millennium to come.



COURTESY SHERRY FRUMKIN GALLERY

JACK BUTLER
LOOKING BACK AT THE FUTURE

Sherry Frumkin Gallery
3026 Airport Avenue, Santa Monica
Through June 19

This “one man group show” marks a valedictory for photographer Jack Butler, a longtime fixture on the Southern California art scene who is soon departing for points north. Surveying a wide-ranging body of work produced since 2003, Butler’s fourth solo show at the Sherry Frumkin Gallery extends his fascination with California car enthusiasts, chronicled in the previously exhibited series *Hot Rod Kulture/Culture*. Using images taken from a pinhole Polaroid camera, Butler harks back to the world of the “Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby”—Tom Wolfe’s 1963 ode to the heady culture of custom-styled cars—with onrushing perspectives and cranked-up contrast that mirror the exuberance of drag strips and auto shows. In more recent work, Butler, a professor of art at California State University since 1988, plunders from the visual storehouse of the past, incorporating found and manipulated images in his work, including a blurry shot of the artist as a young man posed in front of his car. Other views capture a moodier, murkier California that looks like an abandoned set from some stop-motion Claymation film. The nostalgia-tinged title photograph (2010, above) sums up Butler’s search for a fresh start after four decades in Los Angeles. “These works are the seeds of what’s to come,” he commented. “I’m rolling north, looking backward but into the future.”



On the Strip, Las Vegas (1968).

These images are arranged along two adjacent walls, one devoted to the town seen by day, the other by night. The assembly of prints has a cumulative effect that reaches beyond composition or a silver halide aesthetic. They are reconnaissance, evidence that was sifted for clues, which in this case were sought to bolster the argument that the commercial strip hotels and signs formed a rich urban environment.

Most of us are accustomed to the book *Learning from Las Vegas* in its diminutive, and diminished, revised version—the perennial powder-blue paperback. But the original book was altogether different. Two first editions are on display, and you notice immediately that the original was large as a coffee table book, and by comparison to its successor, profusely illustrated. The show restores the centrality of these images to the case the authors were trying to make. By pinning their research to the gallery walls, it becomes apparent how much the volume was a specimen catalog, like Alexander von Humboldt's South American journals. Every hotel—the Stardust, Flamingo, Circus Casino, Horseshoe, Mint, Golden Nugget—is captured on film. A wall-sized chart, on view as well, shows how the images were used to formulate an architectural taxonomy based on the elements of each building, from the roof to the oasis, from the fountain to the foliage.

What's more, the show underscores a turning point in the peda-

gogy of architecture. Photography, rather than sketching, was now the means to teach. The active hand gave way to the blinking eye of the shutter. This is made abundantly clear in the exhibit's presentation of *Edward Ruscha Elevation of the Las Vegas Strip, 1968*. Ruscha's obsession with the prosaic and banal in his photo books *Thirtyfour Parking Lots* and *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* exerted a strong influence on Venturi and Scott Brown (they'd visited the artist in his Los Angeles studio) as a way of seeing. The architects used the still camera to capture the elapsed image of buildings and their surroundings as perceived from the road. Literally strung together to recreate the main thoroughfares—Flamingo Road, Dunes Road, Tropicana Road, and so on—the panoramas are elongated mnemonic devices. This is data that you plumb for hidden (or obvious) understandings glimpsed through aggregation. Buildings begin to exist solely in two dimensions, as stand-ins for ideas—or symbols.

A friend who took his students to this exhibit said the young architects "didn't get it." Naturally: The confrontation between modernism and postmodernism has largely run its course. Still, this show reminds us how urgent and necessary the battle was when the fight began—and how little frisson there is right now that might sustain such a confrontation today.

GREG GOLDIN IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.

THE ROAD TRIPPERS

Las Vegas Studio: Images From the Archives of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown
MOCA Pacific Design Center
8687 Melrose Avenue
West Hollywood
Through June 20

When *Learning from Las Vegas* was published in 1972, the oversized book rocked the world of architec-

ture. The treatise was a bowsprit assault on modernism, which Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steve Izenour believed had become desiccated and uninteresting.

In Las Vegas, where the trio had conducted investigations over the course of several years in the mid-1960s, they saw architecture bursting with energy and noise and, above all, commercialism. From the street, where they took in Vegas' neon-lit strip as part of a studio class for the Yale School of Architecture, they began to dissect and distill a recipe for design that elevated the vernacular and reinstated the symbolic. Systematic and methodical,

the book was intended as a template of sorts for a new, avowedly rhetorical architecture—what became postmodernism and with it, some of the worst buildings of the late 20th century.

Las Vegas Studio: Images from the Archives of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown occupies the one-room second-floor gallery at the Museum of Contemporary Art's West Hollywood outpost at the Pacific Design Center. The exhibit consists principally of 80 photographs snapped by Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour together with students from Yale University, as part of their 1968 study of Las Vegas.

GOT THAT FEELING

A Record of Emotion: The Photographs of Frederick H. Evans
Getty Center
1200 Getty Center Drive
Los Angeles
Through June 6

Before I walked into the exhibit *A Record of Emotion: The Photographs of Frederick H. Evans* at the Getty Center, I had never heard of Frederick Evans. I was in for an inspiring surprise. Evans, originally a bookseller, began photographing in the 1880s and was one of his era's most astute observers of the landscape, cities, and architecture. When he shot a site, he stayed there for several weeks, studying from dawn to dusk the changing effects of light, shadow, and the intangibles in between. In doing so, he was able to tap an essential spirituality to these wonders that he brought out with his delicate and emotional maneuvering not only of light but of mass, texture, and pattern. When light pours through a church window it looks

as thick as liquid, and an impressionist-like image of a French chateau resembles a fairy tale.

Evans' forte was his capture of cathedrals, which at his time were still the most imposing architectural elements in Europe. The light shining down the nave of Westminster Abbey (1911) through a stained-glass window is pure light, lighter than air, and glowing magically. Even the nonreligious can feel a spiritual presence in the structure. A distant shot of Durham Cathedral (1911) with a large river and woods in the foreground feels unreal due to a halo of light and a soft focus. The highly ordered cloisters of Mt. Saint-Michel in Normandy form an abstract dreamscape; the immense fan vaults of Gloucester Cathedral (1891) look like a mesmerizing, grainy painting; the walls of Bourges Cathedral (1901) seem impossibly soft, more like pillows than stone; and a grainy capture of Canterbury Cathedral (1889) looks like a pointillist illustration shrouded in fog and ivy.

Evans' images of cities, landscape, and home life lend insight to the world at that time, albeit often seen with a romantic tinge. He was no doubt aware that these scenes were the apex of the picturesque, views that as modernity approached were

close to disappearing. A look at Kelmscott Manor (1896), the English country estate of William Morris, shows the window swung open, as if someone had just left. With the high-lights blown out, it embodies a dream sequence, not a document. The shot of Lincoln Cathedral (1898) once again captures a church's glowing light in the distance, but in the foreground one sees dark brickworker houses with smoke belching from chimneys. While still mystical, this picture is one of only a few hints in the exhibition of the realities of the day.

But despite the allusions to reality, it is the capture of the ethereal that sets Evans apart, no matter what the setting. Castles that seem to float in the air, or a snaking road leading up to a distant French chateau. It's ironic that in this day and age, when we can create any effect under the sun through Photoshop filters and other digital manipulation, that this photographer, using a huge, clunky device, made the largest buildings in his world seem so light and so magical. And in an age of suppressed feelings, known for its manners and propriety, he was able to pack more emotion into his architectural shots than almost any architectural photographer today.

SAM LUBELL IS AN'S WEST COAST EDITOR.

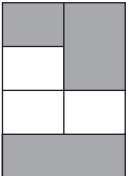


Stairs to the Chapter House, Wells Cathedral (1903).

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Rios Clementi Hale Studios partners, left to right: Julie Smith-Clementi; Mark Rios; Frank Clementi; Bob Hale.

RYAN SCHUDE

THE MULTI-DISCIPLINARIANS

As a firm engaged in landscape architecture, planning, architecture, and product design, Rios Clementi Hale Studios seems to be weathering the recession better than most. **AN's Marissa Gluck** spoke to principals Bob Hale and Frank Clementi about their latest projects, from the Grand Avenue Civic Park and the Century City Greening Plan to their new espresso cups for Intelligentsia.

The Architect's Newspaper: Tell us about the origins of Rios Clementi Hale Studios. How did you find each other?

Frank Clementi: Mark Rios started the company with another partner in 1985. He's a landscape architect and architect, so right from the beginning the office has been multidisciplinary. In 1989, Julie Smith and I were working together at another office on the Sepulveda Arts Park competition, and through that collaboration Julie came to work in this office. About a year later, I came over.

Bob Hale: I met Mark through Eli Broad's house. I was working at Frank Gehry's office on the house and Mark was selected as the landscape architect. That was in 1990. I left Frank's office in 1993 to go work as the VP of design and planning at Universal Studios, where I was responsible for the development of all the projects in Hollywood.

Frank Clementi: A lot of multi-partner offices have a silo condi-

tion, where each partner is responsible for a certain discipline or certain projects. We're a little more fan-shaped. We all started in architecture and we're all back-to-back in the center of the circle, but the areas we look at are overlapping. I have a strong product design and graphics background. And Julie is now president of notNeutral, which is our product and pattern design company. So all of us have this interest in planning, but also have questions about how the different disciplines build on each other.

What are the major differences between disciplines?

BH: One that's interesting is the relationship between pattern-making and landscape architecture, and its overlap with product design. I never really approached an urban or landscape problem from that standpoint, but in fact it becomes a huge piece of it.

FC: This gets a little esoteric, but just the word "field" as it relates to "figure" as opposed to "landscape." When you are so close to something that you can't see anything but the details, those details become the most important thing. But when you're so far away from something that it dissolves into a field, then how it all works together becomes really important. And landscape is a condition that exists at all of those scales. It goes from being right in your face this minute—

this flower is blooming—with graphics, nametags, typography, to planning for 50 years from now when this hotel needs to be here, so how do we put streets in place in order to make sure the valets can work without pissing off the neighbors? Architecture sits in the middle of all that.

From a business perspective, how do you integrate the different disciplines organizationally?

BH: We have a relatively flat office hierarchy. In the last ten years, we've added designations of partners and senior associates and associates and designers, so there's just four levels. A partner is involved in every project, and a senior associate deals with its day-to-day management. There's a lot of interoffice communication. We're a networked organization more than a hierarchical one. We all work together, we all have similar values in terms of design, but also financial things.

FC: The money goes into one big pot.

Do you feel you're insulated to a certain degree in a shifting economy?

BH: I wouldn't say that we're insulated, but the diversity has helped us get through.

FC: We did that very consciously. There was a time we could get any childcare project we wanted. We just happened to be in the right place at the right time when

the first few of them were built. At a certain point, we realized if we become known as the childcare office it ran counter to the general idea of a design firm. So we actually stopped taking that work. Now that seems kind of crazy but it was very calculated; we were careful to always reinvent the wheel. If you know what you're going to be doing, you're not really designing anymore. The process of design is really important because you don't know what you're going to end up with. You just can't go through the motions, if you're doing design.

BH: This is a firm that is driven by ideas and exploration. Anytime we get a little too comfortable with things, we move to something different.

Let's talk about your collaboration with Intelligentsia on coffee cups. How did that come about? I guess you guys really love coffee.

FC: I'm a dilettante compared to those guys. There's a contact high, similar to our experience with Austin City Limits, of working with people that are into what they do. It's completely different from a spec office building. You're designing for a very specific condition. Intelligentsia is serious. They are very empirical, they don't care about the rules, they'll try anything. They saw we were like them. We weren't going to just do things the way they were always done.

We had to prove they were the right way to do them. It's a very democratic and pragmatic method. We end with a product as small as a cup at the same time we're working on a 16-acre park downtown with some of the same staff.

How do you transition from private developer to working on a civic project for Century City?

BH: We've done lots of work for both private firms and public entities. We got to know the public folks through having initiated work from a private developer.

FC: Century City had systemic problems. Each of the blocks will never have a connection to another block unless you deal with it systemically. Originally, the planners thought that it didn't have to have pedestrians.

BH: It's been interesting. There is a lot of work going on there now like the Century Plaza hotel. We're also doing the masterplan for Universal Studios. In terms of acreage, it's the biggest project but it's only at the planning and entitlement level.

The Grand Avenue Civic Park is about to go out to bid. That's the largest landscape we're building. There was a lot of civic engagement in terms of process. The Related folks had to pay the lease on the land upfront. The check had cleared before they started having problems. It's the only part of the whole Grand Avenue project moving forward.

FC: If you're a populist, then it's a huge lucky break for the city.

When do you expect to break ground on the Civic Park?

FC: It should break ground by June.

Let's talk about the direction LA has been taking in the past decade. Where do you see it moving in the next decade?

FC: You can float along, but you still should know where the waves are. I grew up here and what I like about the city is its nodal quality—its centerlessness. I live in Venice and deliberately don't work there. I take public transportation. There are overlapping layers of the city. I love classical cities like Paris and Manhattan where you have an understanding of the hierarchical condition. But I like the rhizomatic nature of Los Angeles. The concern I have is that an antiquated notion of a central condition is the only option. I still question if that is the only way. Technology makes it not so necessary to be in the same physical place. This idea of shifting centers is intriguing. I don't argue that Silver Lake is better or worse than Venice. I love the balkanization. There's a cultural richness that resists homogeneity.

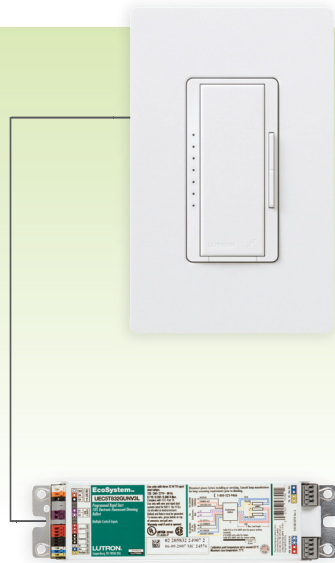
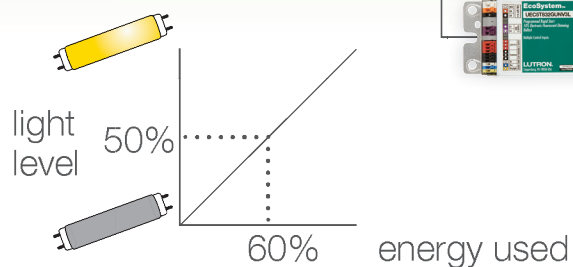
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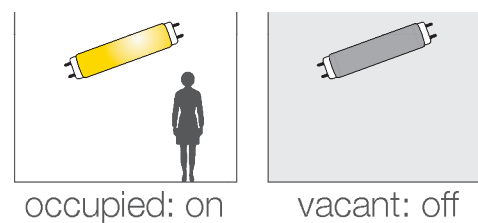
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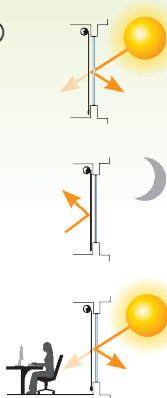
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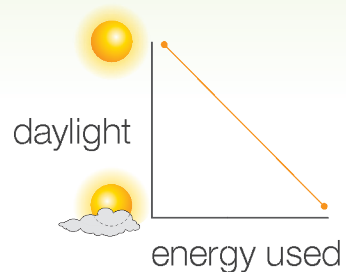
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